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Agent's Reference No. P3958 127770

TO THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF WIPO

APPLICANT: TOWNSEND ENGINEERING COMPANY, et al.
INT'L APPLN NO: PCT/US00/02028
INT'L FILING DATE: 26, January 2000
TITLE: METHOD AND MEANS FOR FILLING NATURAL
CASING SAUSAGES

**LETTER TRANSMITTING NEW SHEETS CONTAINING
NEW CLAIM UNDER ARTICLE 19**

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF WIPO
34, chemin des Colombettes
1211 Geneva 20, SWITZERLAND

Dear Sir:

In response to the International Search Report and the prior art references disclosed therein dated June 6, 2000, enclosed are substitute pages 6, 6A, 7, 8, 9, 9A and 9B in the above international application. The following have been amended:

Claim 6, line 1, change "claim 1" to --claim 22--.

Claim 9, line 1, change "claim 7" to --claim 8--.

Claim 18, line 1, change "claim 6" to --claim 1--.

Claim 1 has been amended on page 6.

New claims 22-24 have been added as page 9A and 9B.

REMARKS

-----Independent method claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations from claim 6 regarding the thrust collar, and the step of intermittently pushing the thrust collar against the casing without squeezing or compressing the casing, but to facilitate the forward movement of the casing on the stuffing tube. None of the cited references teach or suggest such a step of intermittently pushing the thrust collar on natural casing, as required by amended claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 and dependent claims 2-5 and 18 distinguish over the references so as to be in proper form for allowance.

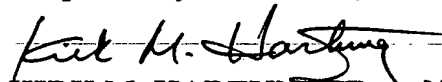
Independent machine claim 17 and independent machine claim 24 are similar to claim 1 in requiring a thrust collar slidably mounted on the stuffing tube for moving or pushing a natural casing on the stuffing tube. Since none of the references cited in the International Search Report disclose such a thrust collar, claim 10, and depending claims 11-16 and 19-21, as well as claim 17, distinguish over the references so as to be allowable.

Independent method claim 7 requires a step of "moving the casing hopper away from its position adjacent the case and filling station when natural casings are placed on a stuffing tube in the casing filling station." Similarly, independent machine claim 10 requires "means on the machine for moving the casing hopper away from its position adjacent the casing filling station when natural casings are placed on a stuffing tube in the casing filling station." None of the cited references show such a moveable casing hopper, such that claims 7 and 10 distinguish over the cited references so as to be allowable, along with claims 8 and 9 depending from claim 7 and claims 11-16 depending from claim 10.

New independent claim 22 incorporates the limitations from claims 1 and 3, and particularly requires a resilient brake element in the chuck to impede the longitudinal movement of the natural casing on the stuffing tube. Similarly, independent machine claim 23 requires the resilient brake element for impeding the movement of the natural casing on the stuffing tube. None of the references from the International Search Report teach or suggest such a resilient brake element. Accordingly, 22 and 23 distinguish over the references so as to be allowable.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that a Notice of Allowance be issued.

Respectfully submitted,



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